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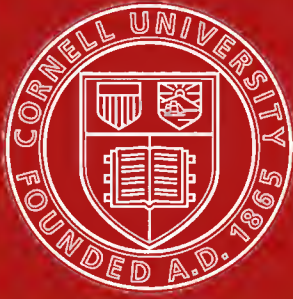
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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
IN FORTY VOLUMES

Editor's Autograph Edition

LIMITED TO TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY SETS
FOR SALE IN AMERICA AND ENGLAND
OF WHICH THIS IS NUMBER 62

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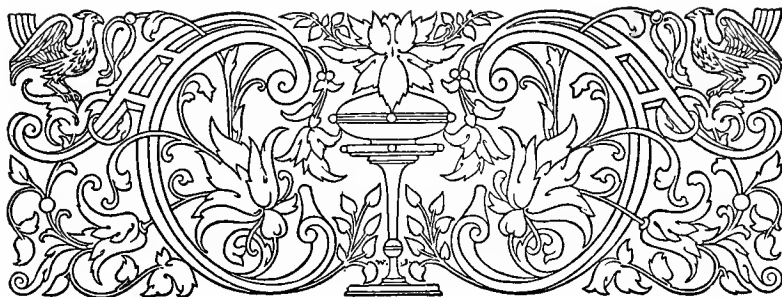




BY THE WINDY PRESS

T*HE reconciliation of Oberon and Titania.*

ACT IV, SCENE 1, line 73.



THE COMPLETE WORKS OF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WITH ANNOTATIONS AND
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION
BY SIDNEY LEE

VOLUME VI

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY GEORGE E. WOODBERRY
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY C. WILHELM



NEW YORK GEORGE D. SPROUL MCMVII

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INTRODUCTION



SHAKESPEARE was first a poet, and afterwards a dramatist; the history of his development was the powerful specialisation of general poetical faculty. He was a very conscious artist; he came early to hold clearly defined in his mind the matter appropriate to imagination, a method of work and a philosophy, — by which I mean a way of conceiving the world, — in whose sphere this matter took on intellectual worth, moral order, and sensuous charm, and from whose laws this method proceeded. Life first appeared to him as a lyrical power; in his earlier plays this tone is constant, and often exceeds and impairs their dramatic quality; golden words, the echo of rhyme, the linked melody of stanzaic structure inside the dialogue, the chorus combination of the speeches

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

at marked points, the line for line antiphony of older drama which he inherited, are some of these obvious lyrical traits; and lyricism shows its dominancy also in frequent situations and in soliloquy more deeply imbedded in the drama, and even controls character itself, as in Richard II., Queen Margaret, and perhaps Romeo, in whose career of passion the climaxes of the play are not only lyrical moments but take lyrical form, except in the last act, which is in a greater dramatic manner. This lyricism Shakespeare was slow to disuse, and in his latest work it came back with an autumnal flowering. It was at the first not only youthfully impulsive, but reflective and studious. In "Love's Labour's Lost" may be seen the delight of the young poet conning his art, interested in rhetoric, style, diction; examining, choosing, and refining; concerned with the externals of poetising. The height of his lyricism is reached in "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; and naturally the same play discloses the completion of his self-education in this direction, when he had left all questions of verbal surface and structure behind and, entering into the inner secrecy of art, saw its essential nature. What Biron had begun, Theseus finishes.

Every play of Shakespeare is unique and has a world to itself. In some of the dramas this other world is so powerfully made, it draws into itself so much of the reality of the interest, that it seems to persist by a being of its own long after its inhabitants have been laid away in the tragic grave or love's felicity, as the case may be. "Hamlet" and "Twelfth Night" have such an atmos-

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phere ; but the disclosure is more striking when there is a finer sense of fresh discovery in it. In that age of new geography and England's adventurers taking practical possession of the globe, the inland poet added something to her domain ; he found the forest of Arden, the witch-haunted Scottish heath, the magic isle of Prospero, and together with these he entered what was the most marvellous realm in this kind, the fairy world. If "A Midsummer Night's Dream" attended the celebration of some noble marriage, that was incidental ; but no setting could be more appropriate to the play than such an occasion where the stately lovers should see themselves mirrored in the Athenian king and queen witnessing a play and spectators besides of the action of that fairy power, in an enchantment of midsummer night, which was also to invoke blessings on their wedded union. The bride-bed begins and ends the play ; sleep, night, and dream are its world ; poesy — to use the word of lyrical touch — is its element. The marriage of Theseus is the enclosing frame of all ; but in the foreground and centre are the creatures, sports, and affairs of the fairy sphere. Oberon holds the sceptre and is master of the revels ; the Athenian court, except for its wandering lovers, lies on the outskirts of the scene. Dream is the key-word, the master note on which the melody is built and to which through all changes it returns. It is not the old story how *Life is a Dream* ; with greater subtlety and more philosophical truth, here life is rather a thing that dreams, and all the scene in its moments of high poetic relief has the vivid unreality which is the sphere of

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dreaming power. But even a dream, for dramatic purposes, must have its own cosmos; and this is supplied by the fairy world. It is near nature, near mortals, and fills the visible and known world, but it is isolated from our world by night, and also by sleep, for it is by the intervention of sleep that the lovers come within its sway; it is concentrated, for local habitation and a name, in the enchanted wood. It is, nevertheless, a true world measured by time and space and action; it has distant territories and past history, a king and queen and court with a life of amusement, revels, love-episodes, and royal vexations, all its own; the Indian boy, whose fragranciness is only told of, gives substance to its polity and its affairs. Its function is to organise the dream-spirit of the play, to give sensuous definition and dramatic opportunity, and especially to body forth in films of reality as thin as rainbow bubbles that world of glamour in which Shakespeare will express the essence of the imagination most fantastically, most lyrically. It is the ethereal substance of the play, that in which all the rest coheres and exists, though when it vanishes it leaves "not a rack behind."

Shakespeare, however far afield he may range for poetical matter and creative atmosphere, nevertheless places the true interest in man's life. "Man is one world," in Herbert's phrase, and the other world, in Shakespeare's dramas, whether natural or demoniac or of the elemental spirits, "attends him." Human life in this play is set forth doubly. The court sphere holds the first place, but so far as concerns the action of its higher figures, it is

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very subordinate. Theseus is king, with the duty to administer the laws of the state unwaveringly, to do justice by the code ; and he discharges this office with a noble dignity of speech. He has, moreover, a paternal solicitude for the youthful lovers, and on the proper occasion an older man's resources to satisfy the father behind the scenes. His is the royal sport of hunting, and the final festivities are for his pleasure. He utters the words of most weight in the intellectual sphere, and gives them authority by his grave character. Yet both he and Hippolyta, who is only a consort, are almost lay figures, decorative with a certain antique severity of outline and pose, the restful part in the general action. To the court sphere belong also the two pair of lovers, Valentine and Hermia, Demetrius and Helena. The youths are the ordinary gentleman lovers of Shakespeare's early stage, with the behaviour and love-psychology belonging to the part. Helena, her pursuit of the graceless Demetrius being granted and her betrayal of the rival lovers' plans being excused, is a more maidenly and attractive character than her schoolmate, Hermia, who only dotes upon Valentine and displays the shrewish temper that Shakespeare so often depicts as a feminine trait. The human plot lies in these characters ; it is slight, and does not greatly interest the spectator in their fortunes ; it is conducted with lively incident by the resources of a comedy of errors freshly handled in which a change of parts in the lovers is effected, with surprises for the two maidens resulting in great discomposure for Hermia, and a doubly ironical situation for Helena,

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

wretched in being sought by both lovers, falsely and to her flouting as she thinks. The dramatic action is conventional, yet skilfully contrived, involving the familiar matching of wits, the feminine scolding scene and awakening dream device in *Hermia*; but freshness arises in the treatment of the old machinery of play-acting by means of the novel environing circumstances. The story of the lovers, nevertheless, has by itself little vitality, and is principally an instance of invention.

The second phase of human life exhibited lies in the clown-sphere of the play, the crew of Athenian workmen, who in love and duty tender their poor interlude, the first labour of their minds, for the royal pleasure. The humour that flows from their presence is blended from many sources. Bottom, in whom it is concentrated, own countryman of *Dogberry*, is yet singular in his power to expose himself, laying grossly bare a universal human weakness, in his confident ability to play all parts with the unconscious notion that the use of each is to unlock some talent of his own. There is comic situation in the first contact of ignorance with art, when these rude craftsmen attempt to compass it; in the clinging of their minds to the fact of wall and moonshine, and the ludicrous symbolism of their first essays at representation; in the contrast of their coarse realism with the *Thisbe* fable, turning it to silliness with a clayey hand. There is also, of course, an abstract humour in that a parody of the old stage is involved, still effective though the special plays and authors aimed at are no longer of importance, if indeed there was any pointed contemporary satire in the

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piece. The main comedy is in the English characterisation, the low life, which is rendered in the usual way of Shakespeare in dealing with the populace. The clown-sphere is, however, not dramatically in contrast with the court-sphere; its points are not worked out with that end. Its true opposition is rather with the fairy world, and comes to its dramatic height in the enamouring of Titania with the "translated" Bottom. The fairy plot, slighter even than the human plot, is worked out by this incident in the course of which Oberon obtains the Indian boy and peace is restored to the fairy kingdom. The comedy is most exquisite at this point in the play, and composed at once so grotesquely and delicately that the scene remains one of the capital memories of literature. Titania passes under enchantment through sleep, as the lovers do; but for Bottom a way more appropriate for his character is found in Puck's mischief-making spell who claps the ass's head on him. Titania awakes changed within by the herb's compulsion; Bottom is externally changed, yet in the change reveals himself in his proper nature, — the mask on him is really an unmasking; and his mind is unaffected, but adapts itself at once to his new fairy dignities and services as readily as to the lion's part. Enchantment is at its climax; illusion can do no more; the scene goes on with beauty and humour in one rivalry, and only the merriment of surprised delight fills the onlooker at the masque-like spectacle. The clowns are fled to Athens, and following them there after daybreak Bottom returns to his original world and the task in hand, and they act before Theseus's

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court. The play within the play now takes the place of the woodland masque; but the same opposition of the crass mind with art is subtly echoed in the enactment of the interlude, and the scene is still illusory, though now with the illusion of art.

Character, plot, incident, situation, dialogue, — it is plain that the interest of the play, the charm that has made it a marvel of fantasy and beauty, does not lie in these, but in the diffused dream-atmosphere in which all of life is breathing in the enchanted night. Illusion is the theme to which the play returns in Protean shapes. In its grossest form, the illusion of the senses, which is such a stumbling-block to the hard-headed workingmen of Athens, it is given only by the instrumentality of Puck, the mischief-maker; he transforms Bottom to his marvellous self, the ass-headed one, and he misleads the angry lovers, keeping them apart in the tangled wood. The illusion of the heart appears at every turn and in various disguises: humanly speaking, love is the only interest of the play, and love is the illusion of the heart. So it seems, though obscurely and poetically, to the happy pair of eloping lovers, who in that lyrical part for part chorused dialogue, in which they take up each other's words as in a little song, join in speaking of it, Elizabethan-wise, as

“Momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say ‘Behold!’
The jaws of darkness do devour it up.”

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More clearly to Helena, seeing how love's enchantment works on the deceived Demetrius disdainfully abandoning her charms for Hermia, its true nature is apparent as she uses the stock-expression of Elizabethan love-psychology:—

“Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity :
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind ;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind :
Nor hath love's mind of any judgement taste ;
Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste :
And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.”

In the wood the juice of the little flower of lovers, on which Cupid's arrow fell when he shot harmlessly at the virgin votaress of the West, distilled on the eyes of Valentine made him pursue Helena, and with changed affections call her

“goddess, nymph, divine and rare,
Precious, celestial ;”

on the eyes of Titania made her wake to mirror the tender vision of the ass's head, engarlanded with flowers, curried by the patient Cobweb and Mustardseed, with “a great desire to a bottle of hay” ; on the eyes of Demetrius gave him back to wronged Helena, never to change more, the gift of Oberon, gentle to lovers, who took not off the powerful charm. The lovers woke deeming Theseus with his hounds a vision of that sleep-cumbered night, where, as if it had been Morpheus's own realm every one

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fell to slumber with the frequency and inconsequence of childhood or old age in its neglected corner. But the great illusion is the illusion of art. It is stated with philosophical precision in the front of the last act, which is its sphere ;

“Such tricks hath strong imagination ;
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy.”

It is described as the function of the poet : —

“And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.”

It is put forth by Theseus as the essence of all art : “The best in this kind are but shadows ; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.” This is that great shadow-idea, one of the few that are constant in Shakespeare, whose persistence through all his thought is so marked a characteristic. King Richard's mirror is an early example ; and here, in this play, Oberon, who is a prophecy of Prospero, is named “King of Shadows.” Thus Oberon, who controls the action of the play, is the master spirit of its idea.

Illusion in these various forms, involving the whole compass of life, is strongly supported on all sides by the lyrical element which is also omnipresent. It appears, characteristically, in that opening song-dialogue of Lysander and Hermia ; it is the natural speech, song-

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speech, of Puck and the fairies in the induction to the fairy world; and it governs the close in those songs of blessing which Coleridge thought the English notes of a better Anacreon. But it is more pervasive than this; its pastoralism gives the atmosphere, and detail as well, to the rural description, and absorbs all nature in its own point of view in the account of the blight that had fallen on the land: it yields those idyl pictures of girlhood friendship, Cupid shooting his bolt into the West, Hermia's awaking, the Indian boy's mother, the hounds of Theseus, which enamel the verse; and throughout it inspires the infinite touches of golden word and melodious cadence which make the language of such surpassing beauty and pure vocal charm. It is in such a garment of lyricism that the theme of illusion is clothed, and it is thrown over the humour as well as the beauty of the play. It seems sometimes that Shakespeare in "the Northern Island sundered once from all the human race" was the crest of the Renaissance that there and in him reached its climax; the historical perspective of three centuries is not yet enough to let this be certainly said; but in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," how much there is characteristic of the great Italian mood of Europe, idyllic, pastoral, delighting in beauty, painting the frieze of the world with mingled loveliness and grotesqueness, but on no part of it, however Cupid and monster wreathed, such a twine of delicacy and fun as the creatures and pranks of Oberon's court in the wood.

Many of the plays of Shakespeare appear to be climactic, and there may be error in ascribing such swift

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

and mighty changes even to the soul most capable of education of all born of English earth. If the view here taken have any colour of probability, if it be not in its turn a dreaming of the mind, this play discloses as its main characteristic the ripened presence of the poetical faculty, exceeding in value and power the human material with which the dramatist dealt; here Shakespeare at the height of his lyrical inspiration, at the climax of the modes of power possible to its exercise, has reached for the time being a limit. The eloquence of Richard has become, not the passion of Lear, not the natural elevation of Hamlet even, but pure poetry; here the experimental study of Biron has become the mastery of the nature of art in its substance beyond the form; here the handling of the dramatic means of earlier comedy and history has become so habitual that it ceases to occupy any special place or prominence. A supremacy of power in many ways has been achieved. But the sign and proof of excellency in the poetical faculty, which is here to the fore, is the temper of grace by which humour itself is transformed. Bottom, even, in his adornments of flower and leaf, with the doting fondness of the queen of the fairies and the ministries of the sweet winged courtiers, becomes almost poetical. To poetise humour is the last victory of the spirit of the beautiful. Courtesy wins a similar noble triumph in the human sphere, when Theseus lays down its law, finding grace in halting words and simple virtue in the awkward service of even the coarse-handed and rude-minded craftsmen of Athens turned poet and player in their lowest

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estate for his sake. The presence of this spirit in both kinds is like the touch of Shakespeare's hand ; the man is felt through it, whose wisdom was amiableness in that morning hour. It is a poet's wisdom and fitly crowns him at the moment of his achievement.

The play, too, is throughout a poet's play. It has the fluidity, the brightness, the insubstantiality of a poet's conception of life ; for life to him in whose hand it is plastic, contracts plasticity from his hand. Amid such scenes rising in the wakeful fancy life collects enchantment like dew, and seems itself the wood blown through by the breath of the summer night, sleep-heavy, dream-haunted. Then it is nature to use Puck's words, saying, "What fools these mortals be," who take this world for eternal where there is no abiding principle. Art itself is but Hamlet's "shadow's shadow," yet it has more of eternity in it, and passes not away. This supremacy of the imaginative view of the world which permeates the play has made it peculiarly dear to poets, and there was such felicity in its conception that it has fertilised their minds, and occasioned a European progeny whose dwelling place is Oberon's world, so real has that world which Shakespeare evoked become to the imagination of men. It is true, of course, that historical probability gives such credence to Oberon as the legend of Troy gave to Achilles ; in an old French poem he appears, and even the Indian boy in his company ; but it is to be feared that, like Agamemnon, the Indian boy without his poet would have slipped into oblivion. The issue of genius is of more import than its obscure ancestry ; it is often

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infertile ; but Shakespeare not only gave the mould of heroic and romantic human character to the English imagination ; he also made it free of his domains, though it is a daring spirit who ventures to conjure there. The fairy world, by virtue of some kindness in it, has been nearer to the poetic mind than Arden or the magic isle, and more familiarly ranged. A literature, indeed, has sprung from it trailing a bright track in the world's fancy. The source, nevertheless, remains shining over all. In this play, — to draw these suggestions to an end, — Shakespeare, perfected in poetry, found himself in Oberon “King of Shadows,” lord of the lyrical world of sensuous emotion and all that there inhabits, even to laughter at its clownish human visitants. He left this realm of the gracious comedy of beauty to hold the sceptre of illusion in the human soul, and sway for a season the tragic world ; but in that Buddhistic progress he made through the souls of men, within the limits of one mortal life, coming to his last transmigration in Prospero, he again unveiled himself as “King of Shadows,” still in the same dream-life that he had first seized in the conception of the midsummer night, — the illusory world of art, of life, of all being known to man's consciousness ; and wrote the last word of poetic truth : —

“We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.”

G. E. WOODBERRY.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THESEUS, Duke of Athens.

EGEUS, father to Hermia.

LYSANDER, }
DEMETRIUS, } in love with Hermia.

PHILOSTRATE, master of the revels to Theseus.

QUINCE, a carpenter.

SNUG, a joiner.

BOTTOM, a weaver.

FLUTE, a bellows-mender.

SNOUT, a tinker.

STARVELING, a tailor.

HIPPOLYTA, queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.

HERMIA, daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander.

HELENA, in love with Demetrius.

OBERON, king of the fairies.

TITANIA, queen of the fairies.

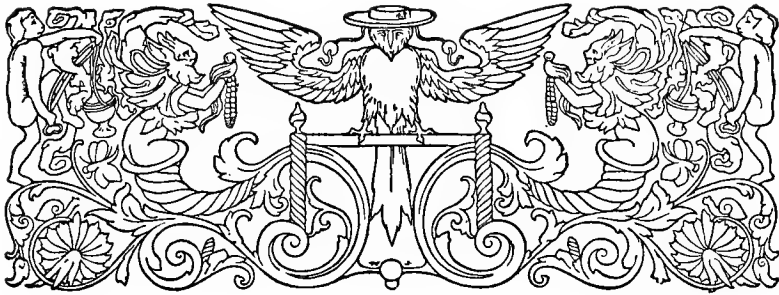
PUCK, or Robin Goodfellow.

PEASEBLOSSOM, }
COBWEB, } fairies.
MOTH, }
MUSTARDSEED, }

Other fairies attending their King and Queen. Attendants on
Theseus and Hippolyta.

SCENE — *Athens, and a wood near it*

¹ DRAMATIS PERSONÆ] Two editions of the play appeared in quarto in 1600, during Shakespeare's lifetime. Of these, that which was "printed by James Roberts" was followed in the First Folio of 1623. None of the early texts are divided into scenes. The Folio version marked the acts alone. The Quartos ignore acts and scenes alike. Again, neither Folios nor Quartos supply the "dramatis personæ." Rowe's edition of 1709 first gave a list of characters, with indication of the scenes. The scenic divisions, as usually adopted now, were devised by a later commentator, Capell.



ACT FIRST—SCENE I—ATHENS

THE PALACE OF THESEUS

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and Attendants

THESEUS



OW, FAIR HIPPOLYTA,
our nuptial hour
Draws on apace ; four happy days
bring in
Another moon : but, O, methinks,
how slow
This old moon wanes ! she lingers
my desires,
Like to a step-dame, or a dowager,
Long withering out a young man's
revenue.

HIP. Four days will quickly
steep themselves in night ;

Four nights will quickly dream away the time ;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

10

⁴ *lingers*] causes to linger, protracts.

¹⁰ *New-bent*] Rowe's correction of the original reading *Now bent*.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT I

THE. Go, Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments ;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth :
Turn melancholy forth to funerals ;
The pale companion is not for our pomp. [*Exit Philostrate.*
Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
And won thy love, doing thee injuries ;
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph and with revelling.

Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS

EGE. Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke ! 20

THE. Thanks, good Egeus: what's the news with thee ?

EGE. Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander: and, my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child :
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchanged love-tokens with my child :
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung, 30
With feigning voice, verses of feigning love ;

27 *This man hath bewitch'd*] This is the reading of the two Quartos and the First Folio. By slurring "hath" in pronunciation, the metrical irregularity may be neutralised. The later Folios improve the metre by reading *This hath bewitch'd*. Theobald proposed *This man hath witch'd*.

31 *feigning voice . . . feigning love*] There is a play on the word

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

And stolen the impression of her fantasy
 With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
 Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers
 Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth:
 With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart;
 Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
 To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious duke,
 Be it so she will not here before your Grace
 Consent to marry with Demetrius, 40
 I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
 As she is mine, I may dispose of her:
 Which shall be either to this gentleman
 Or to her death, according to our law
 Immediately provided in that case.

THEE. What say you, Hermia? be advised, fair maid:
 To you your father should be as a god;
 One that composed your beauties; yea, and one
 To whom you are but as a form in wax
 By him imprinted and within his power 50

"feigning," which is first used in the technical sense (in music) of "singing softly," "humming," and then in the ordinary sense of "dissembling."

32 *And stolen . . . fantasy*] The general sense is "stealthily gained her affections." "Fantasy" is used like "fancy," for "love" or "thought of love." Cf. line 155, *infra*, and *M. Wives*, V, v, 91: "Fie on sinful *fantasy*." "Impression" means semblance or shape, so that "impression of her fantasy" is equivalent to the "semblance of her love." Cf. *Two Gent.*, II, iv, 197, 198:

"a waxen image 'gainst the fire,
 Bears no *impression* of the thing it was."

35 *unhardened*] soft, impressionable.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT I

To leave the figure or disfigure it.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HER. So is Lysander.

THE. In himself he is ;
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.

HER. I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

THE. Rather your eyes must with his judgement
look.

HER. I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern my modesty, 60
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts ;
But I beseech your Grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

THE. Either to die the death, or to abjure
For ever the society of men.
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires ;
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,
You can endure the livery of a nun ; 70
For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood,
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage ;

⁵⁴ *in this kind*] in business of this nature. The expression twice recurs
below. Cf. IV, i, 88 and 210.

father's voice] father's approval. Cf. *All's Well*, II, iii, 52.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

HER. So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up 80
Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

THE. Take time to pause; and, by the next new
moon, —

The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,
For everlasting bond of fellowship, —
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;
Or on Diana's altar to protest
For aye austerity and single life. 90

DEM. Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazed title to my certain right.

LYS. You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

EGE. Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,
And what is mine my love shall render him.

76 *distill'd*] with its scent extracted and preserved by distillation. Cf. *Sonnet* V, 9, "summer's *distillation*," and 13, "flowers *distilled*," and *Sonnet* LIV, 21: "Of their [*i. e.*, roses] sweet deaths are sweetest odours made." The general sentiment is a leading topic of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*.

80 *virgin patent*] the privilege of remaining a virgin.

81 *his lordship, whose*] the dominion or guardianship of him, to whose, etc.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT I

And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Demetrius.

LYS. I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
As well possess'd ; my love is more than his ; 100
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
If not with vantage, as Demetrius' ;
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia :
Why should not I then prosecute my right ?
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul ; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man. 110

THE. I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof ;
But, being over-full of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come ;
And come, Egeus ; you shall go with me,
I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will ;
Or else the law of Athens yields you up, —
Which by no means we may extenuate, — 120
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta : what cheer, my love ?
Demetrius and Egeus, go along ;
I must employ you in some business
Against our nuptial, and confer with you
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

EGE. With duty and desire we follow you.

[*Exeunt all but Lysander and Hermia.*]

LYS. How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

HER. Belike for want of rain, which I could well 130
Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.

LYS. Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But, either it was different in blood, —

HER. O cross! too high to be enthral'd to low.

LYS. Or else misgraffed in respect of years, —

HER. O spite! too old to be engaged to young.

LYS. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends, —

HER. O hell! to choose love by another's eyes. 140

LYS. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say "Behold!"
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion.

HER. If then true lovers have been ever cross'd, 150
It stands as an edict in destiny:

136 *low*] Theobald's emendation for the old reading *lowe*.

143 *momentary*] The reading of the Quartos. The Folios read *momentarie*. Both forms were common. *Momentary* had the authority of early usage. Cf. "momentaine," Fr. Lat. "momentaneus."

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT I

Then let us teach our trial patience,
 Because it is a customary cross,
 As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
 Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.

Lys. A good persuasion : therefore, hear me, Hermia.
 I have a widow aunt, a dowager
 Of great revenue, and she hath no child :
 From Athens is her house remote seven leagues ;
 And she respects me as her only son. 160
 There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee ;
 And to that place the sharp Athenian law
 Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me, then,
 Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night ;
 And in the wood, a league without the town,
 Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
 To do observance to a morn of May,
 There will I stay for thee.

HER. My good Lysander !
 I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,
 By his best arrow with the golden head, 170
 By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
 By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,

155 *fancy's followers*] For "fancy" in the sense of love, cf. "fancy-free," II, i, 164, *infra*, "fancy-sick," III, ii, 96, and "in fancy," IV, i, 160.

156 *persuasion*] persuasive argument.

170 *By his . . . head*] Ovid (*Met.*, I, 466) credits Cupid with two arrows ; one, that "causeth love," is "all of gold with point full sharpe and bright" ; the other, that "chaseth love," is blunt, "whose steele with leaden head is dight." The quoted words are from Golding's translation.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
When the false Troyan under sail was seen,
By all the vows that ever men have broke,
In number more than ever women spoke,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

LYS. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter HELENA

HER. God speed fair Helena! whither away? 180

HEL. Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.

Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!

Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air

More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,

When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.

Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,

Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;

My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,

My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.

Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated, 190

The rest I'd give to be to you translated.

O, teach me how you look; and with what art

You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart!

HER. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HEL. O that your frowns would teach my smiles such
skill!

HER. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

173 *the Carthage queen*] In *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, the play by Marlowe and Nashe, the heroine is thus described four times. Cf. Act. III, Sc. iv, 40, and IV, iv, 29, 132, 157.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT I

HEL. O that my prayers could such affection move !

HER. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

HEL. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HER. His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine. 200

HEL. None, but your beauty : would that fault were mine !

HER. Take comfort : he no more shall see my face ;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.

Before the time I did Lysander see,

Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me :

O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,

That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell !

LYS. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold :

To-morrow night, when Phœbe doth behold

Her silver visage in the watery glass, 210

Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,

A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,

Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

HER. And in the wood, where often you and I

Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,

Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,

There my Lysander and myself shall meet ;

And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,

To seek new friends and stranger companies.

200 *no fault*] the reading of the first Quarto. The second Quarto and the Folios read *none fault*.

215 *faint primrose-beds*] The epithet probably refers to the colour rather than to the smell. Steevens thought reference was made to the smell. Cf. "pale primroses," *Wint. Tale*, IV, iv, 122, and *Cymb.*, IV, ii, 221 ; "This pale *faint* swan," *K. John*, V, vii, 21.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT I

I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again.

250
[Exit.]

SCENE II — THE SAME

QUINCE'S HOUSE

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING

QUIN. Is all our company here?

BOT. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

QUIN. Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

BOT. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point.

QUIN. Marry, our play is, The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

BOT. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

249 *it is a dear expense*] I pay dearly, I make a bitter bargain (in giving Demetrius information, which will put him on the track of my rival Hermia).

2 *generally*] Bottom's confused error for "particularly," or "severally."

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

QUIN. Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

BOT. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

QUIN. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOT. What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

QUIN. A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOT. That will ask some tears in the true performing of²⁰ it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest: yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play *Ercles* rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison-gates;

²² *condole*] mourn, show signs of lamentation. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 93: "In obstinate *condolement*," and "*condoling*," line 34, *infra*.

²³ *Ercles*] Apparent reference to a popular play of the period. Cf. Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*: "The twelve labors of *Hercules* have I terribly thundered on the stage." Greene's Works, Ed. Grosart, Vol. XII, p. 131.

²⁴ *to tear a cat in*] to rant violently. In Middleton's *Roaring Girl*, 1611, a roguish character is called "Tearcat"; cf. V, i, 160-161: "Ruffling *Tearcat* is my name, and a ruffler is my style, my title, my profession." In the anonymous piece called *Histriomastix*, 1610, it was said of an actor that he "would rend and *tear a cat* upon the stage." *Hamlet* illustrates the general sentiment in his advice to the players to beware of tearing a passion to tatters. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 9 *seq.*

to make all split] to use extravagantly violent gesture; an expression derived from the figure of a storm splitting a vessel at sea. Cf. Beaumont and Fletcher's *Scornful Lady*, II, iii: "Two roaring boys of Rome, that *made all split*."

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT I

And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far,
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.

30

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players.
This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more
condoling.

QUIN. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLU. Here, Peter Quince.

QUIN. Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLU. What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

QUIN. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLU. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a ⁴⁰
beard coming.

QUIN. That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and
you may speak as small as you will.

BOT. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby
too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice, "Thisne,
Thisne;" "Ah Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisby
dear, and lady dear!"

QUIN. No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute,
you Thisby.

BOT. Well, proceed.

QUIN. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

50

STAR. Here, Peter Quince.

QUIN. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's
mother. Tom Snout, the tinker.

⁴³ *speaks as small*] Cf. *M. Wives*, I, i, 43, where Slender says of Anne
Page, "She has brown hair, and *speaks small like a woman*."

⁵²⁻⁵³ *Thisby's mother*] This character, like "Pyramus' father," and "This-

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

SNOUT. Here, Peter Quince.

QUIN. You, Pyramus' father : myself, Thisby's father : Snug, the joiner ; you, the lion's part : and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

SNUG. Have you the lion's part written ? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

QUIN. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing ⁶⁰ but roaring.

BOT. Let me play the lion too : I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me ; I will roar, that I will make the duke say, " Let him roar again, let him roar again."

QUIN. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek ; and that were enough to hang us all.

ALL. That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOT. I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ⁷⁰ ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us : but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove ; I will roar you an 't were any nightingale.

QUIN. You can play no part but Pyramus ; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man ; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day ; a most lovely, gentleman-like man : therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

by's father," mentioned below (l. 55), does not appear in the interlude, as presented in Act V. Sc. i. Starveling, Snout, and Quince play respectively the parts of Moonshine, Wall, and Prologue, which are not noticed in the rehearsals.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT I

BOT. Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in? 80

QUIN. Why, what you will.

BOT. I will discharge it in either your straw colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French crown colour beard, your perfect yellow.

QUIN. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in 90 the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the mean time I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

BOT. We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

QUIN. At the duke's oak we meet.

BOT. Enough; hold or cut bow-strings. [Exeunt.]

83 *purple-in-grain*] scarlet or crimson. Under "migraine," Cotgrave, *Fr.-Engl. Dict.*, gives the meanings scarlet or *purple in grain*.

86 *French crowns*] coins of a bright yellow colour. There is a playful allusion here to the belief that baldness was due to venereal disease, which was held to be a peculiarly French malady.

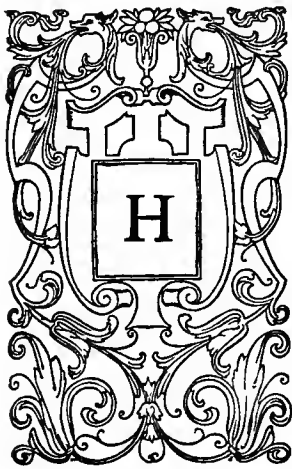
95 *obscenely*] an ignorant blunder for "seemly." Cf. *L. L. L.*, IV, i, 145, where the clown Costard employs the word with like clumsiness.

98 *hold or cut bow-strings*] a colloquial expression for "whatever happens," "in any event."



ACT SECOND — SCENE I
A WOOD NEAR ATHENS

PUCK *Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy and Puck*



OW NOW, SPIRIT!
whither wander you?

FAL. Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander every where,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners
be:

10

In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:

⁷ *moon's sphere*] The metre requires that *moon's* should be pronounced dissyllabically. The moon, like all other planets and stars, was currently held to be enclosed in a hollow crystalline globe or sphere, and it was this sphere which was supposed to circle swiftly round the earth.

⁹ *To dew her orbs*] To sprinkle with dew fairy rings.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT II

I must go seek some dewdrops here,
 And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
 Farewell, thou lob of spirits ; I 'll be gone :
 Our queen and all her elves come here anon.

PUCK. The king doth keep his revels here to-night :
 Take heed the queen come not within his sight ;
 For Oberon is passing fell and wrath, 20
 Because that she as her attendant hath
 A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king ;
 She never had so sweet a changeling :
 And jealous Oberon would have the child
 Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild ;
 But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
 Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy :
 And now they never meet in grove or green,
 By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
 But they do square, that all their elves for fear 30
 Creep into acorn cups and hide them there.

10 *pensioners*] The cowslips are here likened to Queen Elizabeth's gentlemen-at-arms, who were called "pensioners" and wore rich uniforms.

11 *spots*] A reference to the red spots, "the crimson drops I' the bottom of a cowslip," *Cymb.*, II, ii, 38.

15 *hang a pearl . . . ear*] an allusion to the custom of wearing pearl or other jewel in the ear. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, I, v, 44: "Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear."

23 *changeling*] Here the child stolen by the fairies; but commonly applied to the feeble infant who is left by the fairies in exchange for the strong child which they stole away.

30 *square*] Cf. Cotgrave, *Fr.-Engl. Dict.*, "*Sequarrer*: to strut, or *square* it; looke big on't, carrie his armes a kemboll, bragadocio-like."

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

FAL. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow : are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery ;
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern,
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn ;
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm ;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm ?
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck, 40
You do their work, and they shall have good luck :
Are not you he ?

PUCK. Thou speak'st aright ;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal :
And sometimes lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab ;
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob
And on her withered dewlap pour the ale. 50
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me ;
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
And "tailor" cries, and falls into a cough ;

47 *gossip's bowl*] properly a christening cup, usually filled with spiced ale and roasted crabapples. A "gossip" was a "sponsor."

54 "*tailor*"] The reading seems doubtful. Dr. Johnson thought that he had heard some such exclamation start to the lips of one who suddenly fell backward ; the doctor also suggested that one who slips beside his chair "falls as a tailor squats upon his board."

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT II

And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh ;
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room, fairy ! here comes Oberon.

FAL. And here my mistress. Would that he were
gone !

*Enter, from one side, OBERON, with his train ; from the other,
TITANIA, with hers*

OBE. Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania. 60

TITA. What, jealous Oberon ! Fairies, skip hence :
I have forsworn his bed and company.

OBE. Tarry, rash wanton : am not I thy lord ?

TITA. Then I must be thy lady : but I know
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest steppe of India ?
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon, 70
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

OBE. How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,

No contemporary usage has been met with to confirm the doctor's
conjectural explanation.

69 *steppe*] This is the reading of the first Quarto, but is doubtless a mis-
spelling of "steepe" or "mountain," which is found in all other
early editions. The Russian form, "steppe," was unknown to
Western Europe till the end of the 18th century.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
 Knowing I know thy love to Theseus ?
 Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
 From Perigenia, whom he ravished ?
 And make him with fair Ægle break his faith,
 With Ariadne and Antiopa ? 80

TITA. These are the forgeries of jealousy :
 And never, since the middle summer's spring,
 Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
 By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
 Or in the beached margent of the sea,
 To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
 But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
 Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
 As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea 90
 Contagious fogs ; which, falling in the land,
 Have every pelting river made so proud,
 That they have overborne their continents :
 The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
 The ploughman lost his sweat ; and the green corn

78-80 *Perigenia . . . Ægle . . . Ariadne . . . Antiopa*] The tale of Theseus's relations with these four women is described in Plutarch's life of Theseus, with which his collected "Lives" begin. The book was accessible to Shakespeare in North's translation. North transforms the Greek Περικωνή into the unauthorised shape "Perigouna."

88-114 *the winds . . . which is which*] The extremely bad weather in England during the winter of 1593-94 seems to have suggested this passage. The meteorological disturbances of that season are described in very similar terms in Dr. King's "Lectures upon Ionas," delivered at York in 1594, but not published till 1618.

Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard :
 The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
 And crows are fatted with the murrion flock ;
 The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud ;
 And the quaint mazes in the wanton green,
 For lack of tread, are undistinguishable :
 The human mortals want their winter here ;
 No night is now with hymn or carol blest :
 Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
 Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
 That rheumatic diseases do abound :
 And thorough this distemperature we see
 The seasons alter : hoary-headed frosts
 Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose ;
 And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown

100

98 *nine men's morris*] This was a boy's game, popular in the Midlands. It was played on turf. Three concentric squares were cut. The middle space was kept clear. Outside it, four lines connected the angular points of the three squares, while another four bisected their sides. Holes in each of these eight transverse lines emphasised the points at which they crossed or touched the squares. There were two players, each of whom, being provided with "nine men," or counters, sought to prevent the other from filling with his counters the three holes in any one of the eight transverse lines. Players were permitted alternate moves, as in draughts. The French name of "merelles," which the men or counters originally bore, was corrupted into "morris."

99 *quaint mazes*] complicated labyrinthine figures, which boys were in the habit of marking on the grass.

109 *thin*] All the early editions read *chin*. Theobald conjectured *chill*. "Thin," a late emendation, often means "thin haired." Cf.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds 110
 Is, as in mockery, set : the spring, the summer,
 The childing autumn, angry winter, change
 Their wonted liveries ; and the mazed world,
 By their increase, now knows not which is which :
 And this same progeny of evils comes
 From our debate, from our dissension ;
 We are their parents and original.

OBE. Do you amend it, then ; it lies in you :
 Why should Titania cross her Oberon ?
 I do but beg a little changeling boy, 120
 To be my henchman.

TITA. Set your heart at rest :
 The fairy land buys not the child of me.
 His mother was a votaress of my order :
 And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,
 Full often hath she gossip'd by my side ;
 And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
 Marking the embarked traders on the flood ;
 When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive
 And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind ;
 Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait 130
 Following, — her womb then rich with my young
 squire, —
 Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
 To fetch me trifles, and return again,
 As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.

Rich. II, III, ii, 112 : “*thin* and hairless scalps.” In Elizabethan writing *t* and *c* were difficult to distinguish.

130 *swimming*] gliding ; a dancing step was called the *swim*.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT II

But she, being mortal, of that boy did die ;
And for her sake do I rear up her boy ;
And for her sake I will not part with him.

OBE. How long within this wood intend you stay ?

TITA. Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.

If you will patiently dance in our round, 140
And see our moonlight revels, go with us ;
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

OBE. Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

TITA. Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away !
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

[Exit Titania with her Train.]

OBE. Well, go thy way : thou shalt not from this
grove

Till I torment thee for this injury.

My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest

Since once I sat upon a promontory,

And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back, 150

Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,

That the rude sea grew civil at her song,

149-166. This passage is commonly interpreted as a reminiscence of the pageant with which the Earl of Leicester entertained Queen Elizabeth on her visit to his castle of Kenilworth in 1575. It is quite possible that the outdoor fêtes which distinguished the royal reception were witnessed by Shakespeare in boyhood. Queen Elizabeth is certainly intended by "a fair vestal throned by the west" (l. 158). The ordinary interpretation identifies "Cupid all arm'd" with the Queen's host, Leicester, who, failing in his endeavour to entrap his sovereign's affections, attracted the love of Lettice, Countess of Essex, whom he subsequently married. On the other hand, the lines may be no more than a play of fancy encircling a poetic compliment to Queen Elizabeth.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music.

PUCK. I remember.

OBE. That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd : a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts : 160
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell :
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower ; the herb I shew'd thee once :
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid 170
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb ; and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

PUCK. I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes.

[Exit.

OBE. Having once this juice,

164 *fancy-free*] free from love ; cf. "fancy-sick," III, ii, 96, *infra*, and note on I, i, 155, *supra*.

168 *love-in-idleness*] one of the many popular names of the pansy, or heart's-ease (Lat., *Viola tricolor*).

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT II

I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
The next thing then she waking looks upon,
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull, 180
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,
She shall pursue it with the soul of love :
And ere I take this charm from off her sight,
As I can take it with another herb,
I'll make her render up her page to me.
But who comes here ? I am invisible ;
And I will overhear their conference.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA following him

DEM. I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia ?
The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me. 190
Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood ;
And here am I, and wode within this wood,
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

HEL. You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant ;
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel : leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you.

DEM. Do I entice you ? do I speak you fair ?
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth 200
Tell you, I do not nor I cannot love you ?

186 *I am invisible*] Among the properties enumerated in the Diary of the stage-manager, Henslowe, was "a robe for to go *invisible*," This Oberon now assumes.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

HEL. And even for that do I love you the more.
 I am your spaniel ; and, Demetrius,
 The more you beat me, I will fawn on you :
 Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
 Neglect me, lose me ; only give me leave,
 Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
 What worser place can I beg in your love, —
 And yet a place of high respect with me, —
 Than to be used as you use your dog ? 210

DEM. Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit ;
 For I am sick when I do look on thee.

HEL. And I am sick when I look not on you.

DEM. You do impeach your modesty too much,
 To leave the city, and commit yourself
 Into the hands of one that loves you not ;
 To trust the opportunity of night
 And the ill counsel of a desert place
 With the rich worth of your virginity.

HEL. Your virtue is my privilege : for that 220
 It is not night when I do see your face,
 Therefore I think I am not in the night ;
 Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
 For you in my respect are all the world :
 Then how can it be said I am alone,
 When all the world is here to look on me ?

DEM. I 'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,
 And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

220-224] This seems an echo of *Tibullus*, IV, xiii, 11 :

" tu nocte vel atra
 Lumen, et in solis tu mihi turba locis."

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT II

HEL. The wildest hath not such a heart as you.
Run when you will, the story shall be changed : 230
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase ;
The dove pursues the griffin ; the mild hind
Makes speed to catch the tiger ; bootless speed,
When cowardice pursues, and valour flies.

DEM. I will not stay thy questions ; let me go :
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

HEL. Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius !
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex : 240
We cannot fight for love, as men may do ;
We should be woo'd, and were not made to woo.

[*Exit Dem.*]

I'll follow thee, and make a heaven of hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well. [*Exit.*]

OBE. Fare thee well, nymph : ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love.

Re-enter PUCK

Hast thou the flower there ? Welcome, wanderer.

PUCK. Ay, there it is.

OBE. I pray thee, give it me.
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows ; 250
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine :

244 *upon the hand*] by the hand. Cf. *Much Ado*, IV, i, 223 : "She died *upon his words*."

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight ;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in :
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove :
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth : anoint his eyes ;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady : thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love :
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

260

PUCK. Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — ANOTHER PART OF THE WOOD

Enter TITANIA, with her train

TITA. Come, now a roundel and a fairy song ;
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence ;
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds ;
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,
To make my small elves coats ; and some keep back
The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep ;
Then to your offices, and let me rest.

[31]

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT II

SONG

Fir. Fairy. You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen ; 10
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.

CHORUS

Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby ;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lullaby :
Never harm,
Nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh ;
So, good night, with lullaby.

Fir. Fairy. Weaving spiders, come not here ; 20
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence !
Beetles black, approach not near ;
Worm nor snail, do no offence.

CHORUS

Philomel, with melody, &c.

SEC. FAIRY. Hence, away ! now all is well :
One aloof stand sentinel.

[*Exeunt Fairies. Titania sleeps.*]

9 *double*] forked. Cf. III, ii, 72, *infra*, "adder . . . with *doubler* tongue," and *Tempest*, II, ii, 13 : "Adders who with cloven tongues."

21 *long-legg'd spinners*] a synonym of the "weaving spiders" of the previous line.

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Enter OBERON, and squeezes the flower on Titania's eyelids

OBE. What thou seest when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy true-love take ;
Love and languish for his sake :
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear, 30
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wakest, it is thy dear :
Wake when some vile thing is near. [*Exit.*]

Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA

LYS. Fair love, you faint with wandering in the
wood ;

And to speak troth, I have forgot our way :
We 'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day.

HER. Be it so, Lysander : find you out a bed ;
For I upon this bank will rest my head. 40

LYS. One turf shall serve as pillow for us both ;
One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.

HER. Nay, good Lysander ; for my sake, my dear,
Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.

LYS. O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence !
Love takes the meaning in love's conference.
I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit,
So that but one heart we can make of it :
Two bosoms interchained with an oath ;

49 *interchained*] the reading of the Quartos. The Folios read, less intelligibly, *interchanged*.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT II

So then two bosoms and a single troth. 50
Then by your side no bed-room me deny ;
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

HER. Lysander riddles very prettily :
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,
If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy
Lie further off ; in human modesty,
Such separation as may well be said
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
So far be distant ; and, good night, sweet friend : 60
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end !

Lys. Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I ;
And then end life when I end loyalty !
Here is my bed : sleep give thee all his rest !

HER. With half that wish the wisher's eyes be
press'd ! [*They sleep.*

Enter PUCK

PUCK. Through the forest have I gone,
But Athenian found I none,
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence. — Who is here ? 70
Weeds of Athens he doth wear :
This is he, my master said,
Despised the Athenian maid ;
And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
On the dank and dirty ground.
Pretty soul ! she durst not lie

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe.
When thou wakest, let love forbid 80
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid :
So awake when I am gone ;
For I must now to Oberon. [Exit.

Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running

HEL. Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

DEM. I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me
thus.

HEL. O, wilt thou darkling leave me ? do not so.

DEM. Stay, on thy peril : I alone will go. [Exit.

HEL. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase !

The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.

Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies ; 90

For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.

How came her eyes so bright ? Not with salt tears :

If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.

No, no, I am as ugly as a bear ;

For beasts that meet me run away for fear :

Therefore no marvel though Demetrius

Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.

What wicked and dissembling glass of mine

Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne ?

But who is here ? Lysander ! on the ground ! 100

Dead ? or asleep ? I see no blood, no wound.

Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT II

LYS. [*Awaking*] And run through fire I will for thy
sweet sake.

Transparent Helena! Nature shews art,
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

HEL. Do not say so, Lysander; say not so.
What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what
though?

Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content. 110

LYS. Content with Hermia! No; I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
Not Hermia but Helena I love:
Who will not change a raven for a dove?
The will of man is by his reason sway'd
And reason says you are the worthier maid.
Things growing are not ripe until their season:
So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;
And touching now the point of human skill,
Reason becomes the marshal to my will, 120
And leads me to your eyes; where I o'erlook

104 *Nature shews art*] This is the reading of the Quartos. The First Folio substitutes *Nature her shewes*. The other Folios read *here for her*. In any case the metre is slightly irregular. *Nature here shows art* gives the best sense and metre: "in the present instance Nature displays the ingenuity of art, which has invented transparent substances like glass."

118-120 *So I . . . will*] While I was young I did not grow ripe in reason, and now that I have reached the height of human intelligence, reason takes command of my will.

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Love's stories, written in love's richest book.

HEL. Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born ?

When at your hands did I deserve this scorn ?

Is 't not enough, is 't not enough, young man,

That I did never, no, nor never can,

Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,

But you must flout my insufficiency ?

Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do,

In such disdainful manner me to woo.

130

But fare you well : perforce I must confess

I thought you lord of more true gentleness.

O, that a lady, of one man refused,

Should of another therefore be abused !

[Exit.

Lys. She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there :

And never mayst thou come Lysander near !

For as a surfeit of the sweetest things

The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,

Or as the heresies that men do leave

Are hated most of those they did deceive,

140

So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,

Of all be hated, but the most of me !

And, all my powers, address your love and might

To honour Helen and to be her knight !

[Exit.

HER. [Awaking] Help me, Lysander, help me ! do thy
best

To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast !

122 *love's richest book*] Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, I, iii, 86, seq. :

“ And what obscured in this fair volume lies
Find written in the margent of his eyes.
This *precious book of love* . . . ”

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT II

Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel prey. 150
Lysander! what, removed? Lysander! lord!
What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?
Alack, where are you? speak, an if you hear:
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
No? then I well perceive you are not nigh:
Either death or you I'll find immediately. [*Exit.*]

154 *of all loves !]* in the name of all lovers, a common adjuration.

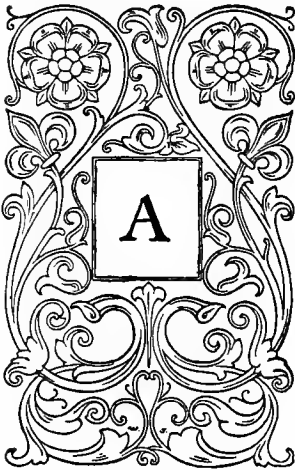


ACT THIRD — SCENE I — THE WOOD

TITANIA LYING ASLEEP

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOOT, and STARVELING

BOTTOM



ARE WE ALL MET?

QUIN. Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the duke.

BOT. Peter Quince, —

QUIN. What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

BOT. There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. ¹⁰ How answer you that?

⁷ *bully*] A good fellow; a general term of endearment, without any insinuation of blustering or hectoring. Cf. *Henry V*, IV, i, 48: "I love the lovely *bully*."

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

SNOUT. By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

STAR. I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

BOT. Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear. 20

QUIN. Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

BOT. No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

SNOUT. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STAR. I fear it, I promise you.

BOT. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in, — God shield us! — a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living: and we ought to look to't. 30

SNOUT. Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

BOT. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect, — "Ladies," — or, "Fair ladies, — I would wish you,"

22 *eight and six*] in alternate verses of eight and six syllables, a common metre of ballads. The prologue, as spoken in Act V. i. 108 *seq.*, when the play is performed, is in alternately rhymed lines of ten syllables each. The piece, as rehearsed, bears small relation at this and other points to the actual performance.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

— or, “I would request you,” — or, “I would entreat you, — not to fear, not to tremble : my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life : no, I am no such thing ; I am a man as other men are :” and there indeed let him name his name, and tell 40 them plainly, he is Snug the joiner.

QUIN. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things ; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber ; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

SNOUT. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play ?

BOT. A calendar, a calendar ! look in the almanac ; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

QUIN. Yes, it doth shine that night.

BOT. Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open, and the 50 moon may shine in at the casement.

QUIN. Ay ; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of moonshine. Then, there is another thing : we must have a wall in the great chamber ; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNOUT. You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom ?

BOT. Some man or other must present wall : and let 60 him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall ; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

QUIN. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake: and so every one according to his cue.

Enter PUCK behind

PUCK. What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?
What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;
An actor too perhaps, if I see cause. 70

QUIN. Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

BOT. Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet, —

QUIN. Odours, odours.

BOT. — odours savours sweet:

So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.

But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,

And by and by I will to thee appear. [*Exit.*

PUCK. A stranger Pyramus than e'er play'd here. [*Exit.*

FLU. Must I speak now? 80

QUIN. Ay, marry, must you; for you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

FLU. Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire,
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

85 *Jew*] See note on *L. L. L.*, III, i, 128.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

QUIN. "Ninus' tomb," man : why, you must not speak that yet ; that you answer to Pyramus : you speak all your part at once, cues and all. Pyramus enter : your ⁹⁰ cue is past ; it is, "never tire."

FLU. O,— As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.

Re-enter PUCK, and BOTTOM with an ass's head

BOT. If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

QUIN. O monstrous ! O strange ! we are haunted. Pray, masters ! fly, masters ! Help !

[Exeunt Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.]

PUCK. I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through
brier :

Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,

A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire ;

And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn, ¹⁰⁰
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn. *[Exit.]*

BOT. Why do they run away ? this is a knavery of them to make me afraid.

Re-enter SNOOT

SNOOT. O Bottom, thou art changed ! what do I see on thee ?

BOT. What do you see ? you see an ass-head of your own, do you ? *[Exit Snout.]*

¹⁰⁶ *an ass-head of your own*] a familiar *tu quoque*. Cf. *M. Wives*, I, iv, 114 : "You shall have a fool's head of your own." The transformation or "translation" of a man into an ass is the main topic of the popular Greek novel, *The Golden Ass*, of Apuleius, translated by William Adlington, 1566. Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1584, and

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

Re-enter QUINCE

QUIN. Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated. [Exit. 109

BOT. I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid. [Sings.

The ousel cock so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill;

TITA. [*Awaking*] What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

BOT. [*Sings*]

The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo gray, 120
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay; —

for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry “cuckoo” never so?

TITA. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:

the prose history of *Dr. Faustus*, cap. xliii, both describe the magical change of a man's head into an ass's head. Shakespeare probably derived hints for Bottom's experience from all these sources.

117 *quill*] musical pipe, not feather, as sometimes interpreted.

120 *plain-song*] melody without variation or accompaniment; the epithet is appropriate to the monotonous note of the cuckoo.

123 *set his wit to*] would match his wit against. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, II, i, 84: “Will you *set your wit to a fool's?*”

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note ;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape ;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee. 129

BOT. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason
for that : and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep
little company together now-a-days ; the more the pity,
that some honest neighbours will not make them friends.
Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

TITA. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

BOT. Not so, neither : but if I had wit enough to get
out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

TITA. Out of this wood do not desire to go :
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate : 140

The summer still doth tend upon my state ;
And I do love thee : therefore, go with me ;
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee ;
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing, while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep :
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
Peaseblossom ! Cobweb ! Moth ! and Mustardseed !

Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, and MUSTARDSEED

FIRST FAI. Ready.

SEC. FAI. And I.

THIRD FAI. And I.

FOURTH FAI. And I.

ALL. Where shall we go ?

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

TITA. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman ; 150
 Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes ;
 Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
 With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries ;
 The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
 And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs,
 And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
 To have my love to bed and to arise ;
 And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,
 To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes :
 Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies. 160

FIRST FAI. Hail, mortal !

SEC. FAI. Hail !

THIRD FAI. Hail !

FOURTH FAI. Hail !

BOT. I cry your worships mercy, heartily : I beseech
 your worship's name.

COB. Cobweb.

BOT. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good
 Master Cobweb : if I cut my finger, I shall make bold
 with you. Your name, honest gentleman ? 170

PEAS. Peaseblossom.

BOT. I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash,
 your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father.
 Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more
 acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir ?

156 *fiery glow-worm's eyes*] Commentators invariably point out that the
 glow-worm's light is in its tail, and that Shakespeare is here in error.

172 *Squash*] Cf. *Tw. Night*, I, v, 149 : " As a *squash* is before it is a
peascod."

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

MUS. Mustardseed.

BOT. Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well : that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house : I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire your more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

TITA. Come, wait upon him ; lead him to my bower. 182

The moon methinks looks with a watery eye ;
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
Lamenting some enforced chastity.

Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — ANOTHER PART OF THE WOOD

Enter OBERON

OBE. I wonder if Titania be awaked ;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.

Enter PUCK

Here comes my messenger.

How now, mad spirit !
What night-rule now about this haunted grove ?

177 *patience*] used ironically, mustard being credited with exciting anger or impatience.

186 *love's tongue*] Pope's emendation for the old reading *lover's tongue*, which is difficult to scan.

5 *night-rule*] night revelry. Cf. *Tw. Night*, II, iii, 117: "this uncivil rule."

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

PUCK. My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls, 10
Were met together to rehearse a play,
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial-day.
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport
Forsook his scene, and enter'd in a brake :
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nole I fixed on his head :
Anon his Thisbe must be answered,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye, 20
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky,
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly ;
And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls ;
He murder cries, and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong ;
For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch ;
Some sleeves, some hats, from yielders all things catch. 30
I led them on in this distracted fear,
And left sweet Pyramus translated there :

13 *barren sort*] dull, brainless company. Cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 44-46 :

"Some quantity of *barren* spectators."

25 *at our stamp*] at hearing our footsteps.

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

When in that moment, so it came to pass,
Titania waked, and straightway loved an ass.

OBE. This falls out better than I could devise.
But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?

PUCK. I took him sleeping, — that is finish'd too, —
And the Athenian woman by his side ;
That, when he waked, of force she must be eyed. 40

Enter HERMIA and DEMETRIUS

OBE. Stand close : this is the same Athenian.

PUCK. This is the woman, but not this the man.

DEM. O, why rebuke you him that loves you so ?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

HER. Now I but chide ; but I should use thee worse,
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.

The sun was not so true unto the day 50
As he to me : would he have stolen away
From sleeping Hermia ? I'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bored, and that the moon
May through the centre creep, and so displease
Her brother's noontide with the Antipodes.
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him ;
So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.

57 *dead*] deadly. Cf. 2 *Hen. IV*, I, i, 71 : "So dull, so *dead* in look,
so woe-begone."

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

DEM. So should the murder'd look ; and so should I,
Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty :
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear, 60
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

HER. What 's this to my Lysander? where is he?
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me ?

DEM. I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

HER. Out, dog! out, cur! thou drivest me past the
bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?
Henceforth be never number'd among men!
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!
Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,
And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch! 70
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
An adder did it ; for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

DEM. You spend your passion on a misprised mood :
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood ;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

HER. I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.

DEM. An if I could, what should I get therefore ?

HER. A privilege, never to see me more.

72 *doubler tongue*] See note on II, ii, 9, *supra*: "Snakes with *double* [*i. e.* forked] tongue." There is a play here on the word "double" in the sense of "deceitful" as well as in that of "forked."

74 *on a misprised mood*] on a fit of anger caused by a mistake. "Misprision" (line 90, *infra*) means "mistake." "Mood" is not uncommonly used by Shakespeare in the sense of "anger" or "fit of anger."

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

And from thy hated presence part I so : 80
See me no more, whether he be dead or no. [Exit.

DEM. There is no following her in this fierce
vein :

Here therefore for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe ;
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender here I make some stay.

[Lies down and sleeps.

OBE. What hast thou done ? thou hast mistaken
quite,

And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight :
Of thy misprision must perforce ensue 90
Some true love turn'd, and not a false turn'd true.

PUCK. Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding
troth,

A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

OBE. About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find :
All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer,
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear :
By some illusion see thou bring her here :
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

PUCK. I go, I go ; look how I go, 100
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow. [Exit.

96 *fancy-sick*] See note on I, i, 155, *supra*.

101 *Tartar's bow*] Probably an Ovidian reminiscence. Cf. *Met.*, X.
588 : "*Scythicâ non setius sagittâ*," rendered by Golding, "as swift
as arrow from a Turkey bow." *Tartar's bow* is a more accurate
rendering of the Latin.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

OBE. Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,
Sink in apple of his eye.
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wakest, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

Re-enter PUCK

PUCK. Captain of our fairy band, 110
Helena is here at hand ;
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover's fee.
Shall we their fond pageant see ?
Lord, what fools these mortals be !

OBE. Stand aside : the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

PUCK. Then will two at once woo one ;
That must needs be sport alone ;
And those things do best please me 120
That befall preposterously.

Enter LYSANDER and HELENA

LYS. Why should you think that I should woo in
scorn ?

Scorn and derision never come in tears :
Look, when I vow, I weep ; and vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true ?

HEL. You do advance your cunning more and
more.

When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray !
These vows are Hermia's : will you give her o'er ? 130

Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh :
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,
Will even weigh ; and both as light as tales.

LYS. I had no judgement when to her I swore.

HEL. Nor none, in my mind, now you give her
o'er.

LYS. Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

DEM. [*Awaking*] O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect,
divine !

To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne ?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow ! 140
That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow,
Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow
When thou hold'st up thy hand : O, let me kiss
This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss !

HEL. O spite ! O hell ! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment :
If you were civil and knew courtesy,
You would not do me thus much injury.

144 *princess of pure white*] That which is the most excellent of its kind may easily be called the *princess* of its kind. Suggested emendations, *e. g. pureness, impress (i. e. crest)*, and others, may be neglected.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
 But you must join in souls to mock me too? 150
 If you were men, as men you are in show,
 You would not use a gentle lady so ;
 To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
 When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
 You both are rivals, and love Hermia ;
 And now both rivals, to mock Helena :
 A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
 To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
 With your derision ! none of noble sort
 Would so offend a virgin, and extort 160
 A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.
 Lys. You are unkind, Demetrius ; be not so ;
 For you love Hermia ; this you know I know :
 And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
 In Hermia's love I yield you up my part ;
 And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
 Whom I do love, and will do till my death.
 HEL. Never did mockers waste more idle breath.
 DEM. Lysander, keep thy Hermia ; I will none :
 If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone. 170
 My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
 And now to Helen is it home return'd,
 There to remain.

150 *in souls*] "heartily," "earnestly," "of set purpose," like the Latin "ex animo." Very many emendations have been suggested, but the original reading is obviously right.

171 *to her*] Modern usage requires *with her*. Elsewhere Shakespeare has "make friends *to*" (*i. e.* with), *Meas. for Meas.*, I, ii, 186.

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

LYS. Helen, it is not so.

DEM. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
Look, where thy love comes ; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter HERMIA

HER. Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes ;
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
It pays the hearing double recompence. 180
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found ;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so ?

LYS. Why should he stay, whom love doth press to
go ?

HER. What love could press Lysander from my side ?

LYS. Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me ? could not this make thee know,
The hate I bare thee made me leave thee so ? 190

HER. You speak not as you think : it cannot be.

HEL. Lo, she is one of this confederacy !
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia ! most ungrateful maid !
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived
To bait me with this foul derision ?
Is all the counsel that we two have shared,

188 *fiery oes*] circles of fire, stars.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time 200
For parting us, — O, is all forgot ?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence ?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key ;
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition ; 210
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem ;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart ;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one, and crowned with one crest.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend ?
It is not friendly, 't is not maidenly :
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

HER. I am amazed at your passionate words. 220
I scorn you not : it seems that you scorn me.

HEL. Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
To follow me and praise my eyes and face ?
And made your other love, Demetrius,
Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,

213-214 *Two of the first, . . . crest*] Our two bodies resemble two coats of arms in heraldry, which belong to a single person, and are surrounded by a single crest.

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,
Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this
To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
And tender me, forsooth, affection, 230
But by your setting on, by your consent?
What though I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
But miserable most, to love unloved?
This you should pity rather than despise.

HER. I understand not what you mean by this.

HEL. Ay, do, persevere, counterfeit sad looks,
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up:
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled. 240
If you have any pity, grace, or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.
But fare ye well: 't is partly my own fault;
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

LYS. Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse:
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!

HEL. O excellent!

HER. Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEM. If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

LYS. Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak
prayers. 250

Helena, I love thee; by my life, I do:

250 *prayers*] Theobald's emendation for the old meaningless reading *praise*.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

DEM. I say I love thee more than he can do.

LYS. If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

DEM. Quick, come!

HER. Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYS. Away, you Ethiopie!

DEM. No, no; he'll . . .

Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow,

But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!

LYS. Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let
 loose,

260

Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!

HER. Why are you grown so rude? what change is
 this?

Sweet love, —

257 *Ethiope*] Sneering allusion to Hermia's brunette complexion. Cf. *L. L. L.*, IV, iii, 268: "And *Ethiopes* of their sweet complexion crack."

257-258 *No, no; he'll . . . loose* ;] In the first Quarto this difficult passage read: "No, no; heele seeme to breake loose." In the First Folio *Sir* is substituted for *heele*, and the line ends at *loose*. Perhaps some words have dropped out. It is difficult to make logical sense of these abrupt expressions. Demetrius denounces Lysander with angry incoherence, in a general sense anticipating his "I'll not trust your word" of line 268, *infra*. First addressing the forsaken Hermia, he now says in effect: "I don't believe Lysander; he'll say anything. He is only pretending to give you up." Then, turning to face his rival Lysander, he adds threateningly: "Behave honestly; take the course that you propose to follow and stick to it; yet don't cross my path (unless at your peril). You are a spiritless, contemptible fellow. Get out of my way."

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

LYS. Thy love ! out, tawny Tartar, out !
Out, loathed medicine ! hated potion, hence !

HER. Do you not jest ?

HEL. Yes, sooth ; and so do you.

LYS. Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

DEM. I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you : I'll not trust your word.

LYS. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her
dead ?

Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so. 270

HER. What, can you do me greater harm than hate ?

Hate me ! wherefore ? O me ! what news, my love !

Am not I Hermia ? are not you Lysander ?

I am as fair now as I was erewhile.

Since night you loved me ; yet since night you left
me :

Why, then you left me, — O, the gods forbid ! —

In earnest, shall I say ?

LYS. Ay, by my life ;

And never did desire to see thee more.

Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt ;

Be certain, nothing truer ; 't is no jest 280

That I do hate thee, and love Helena.

HER. O me ! you juggler ! you canker-blossom !

You thief of love ! what, have you come by night

And stolen my love's heart from him ?

HEL. Fine, i' faith !

Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,

272 *what news, my love !*] what new-fangled notion. Collier's emenda-
tion, *what means my love ?* is unnecessary.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

No touch of bashfulness ? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue ?
Fie, fie ! you counterfeit, you puppet, you !

HER. Puppet ? why so ? ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare 290
Between our statures ; she hath urged her height ;
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem,
Because I am so dwarfish and so low ?
How low am I, thou painted maypole ? speak ;
How low am I ? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HEL. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me : I was never curst ; 300
I have no gift at all in shrewishness ;
I am a right maid for my cowardice :
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her.

HER. Lower ! hark, again.

HEL. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you ;
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood. 310
He follow'd you ; for love I follow'd him ;
But he hath chid me hence, and threaten'd me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too :
And now, so you will let me quiet go,

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

To Athens will I bear my folly back,
 And follow you no further : let me go :
 You see how simple and how fond I am.

HER. Why, get you gone : who is 't that hinders you ?

HEL. A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

HER. What, with Lysander ?

HEL. With Demetrius. 320

LYS. Be not afraid ; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

DEM. No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

HEL. O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd !
 She was a vixen when she went to school ;
 And though she be but little, she is fierce.

HER. Little again ! nothing but low and little !
 Why will you suffer her to flout me thus ?
 Let me come to her.

LYS. Get you gone, you dwarf ;
 You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made ;
 You bead, you acorn.

DEM. You are too officious 330
 In her behalf that scorns your services.
 Let her alone : speak not of Helena ;
 Take not her part ; for, if thou dost intend
 Never so little show of love to her,
 Thou shalt aby it.

LYS. Now she holds me not ;

329 *knot-grass*] a reference to "knot-grass," a straggling, many jointed weed, which was supposed when eaten to check a child's growth. Cf. Beaumont and Fletcher, *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, II, 2: "Should they put him into a strait pair of gaskins, 't were worse than *knot-grass* ; *he would never grow after it*."

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

Now follow, if thou darest, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

DEM. Follow! nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jole.
[*Exeunt Lysander and Demetrius.*]

HER. You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you:
Nay, go not back.

HEL. I will not trust you, I, 340
Nor longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray,
My legs are longer though, to run away. [*Exit.*]

HER. I am amazed, and know not what to say. [*Exit.*]

OBE. This is thy negligence: still thou mistakest,
Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.

PUCK. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.

Did not you tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garments he had on?

And so far blameless proves my enterprise, 350
That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;
And so far am I glad it so did sort,
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

OBE. Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:
Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
The starry welkin cover thou anon
With drooping fog, as black as Acheron;
And lead these testy rivals so astray,
As one come not within another's way.

357 *Acheron*] a river of Hades (not, as Shakespeare describes it in *Macb.*, III, v, 15, "a pit"). "Blackness" was an invariable characteristic of the river. Cf. Verg. *Æn.*, vi, 107, "*Tenebrosa palus Acheronte refuso*," and Milton, *Par. Lost*, II, 578, "Sad Acheron of sorrow *black* and deep."

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue, 360
Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong ;
And sometime rail thou like Demetrius ;
And from each other look thou lead them thus,
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep :
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye ;
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
To take from thence all error with his might,
And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
When they next wake, all this derision 370
Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision ;
And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,
With league whose date till death shall never end.
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy ;
And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

PUCK. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger ; 380
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards : damned spirits all,
That in crossways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone ;
For fear lest day should look their shames upon,
They wilfully themselves exile from light,
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

379 See note *infra*, V, i, 373 ("Hecate's team").

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

OBE. But we are spirits of another sort :
I with the morning's love have oft made sport ;
And, like a forester, the groves may tread, 390
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.
But, notwithstanding, haste ; make no delay :
We may effect this business yet ere day. [Exit.

PUCK. Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down :
I am fear'd in field and town :
Goblin, lead them up and down.
Here comes one. 400

Re-enter LYSANDER

LYS. Where art thou, proud Demetrius ? speak thou
now.

PUCK. Here, villain ; drawn and ready. Where art
thou ?

LYS. I will be with thee straight.

PUCK. Follow me, then,
To plainer ground. [Exit Lysander, as following the voice.

Re-enter DEMETRIUS

DEM. Lysander ! speak again :
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled ?

389 *the morning's love*] Doubtless a reference to Cephalus, the huntsman, to whom the goddess of the morning, Aurora, made love. Cf. *Ov., Met.*, VII, 700 *seq.*

393 *Turns . . . streams*] Cf. *Sonnet xxxiii*, 4 : "Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy."

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

PUCK. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;

I'll whip thee with a rod: he is defiled 410
That draws a sword on thee.

DEM. Yea, art thou there?

PUCK. Follow my voice: we'll try no manhood here.
[*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter LYSANDER

LYS. He goes before me and still dares me on:
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me. [*Lies down.*] Come, thou gentle
day!

For if but once thou show me thy grey light,
I'll find Demetrius, and revenge this spite. [*Sleeps.* 420]

Re-enter PUCK and DEMETRIUS

PUCK. Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why comest thou not?

DEM. Abide me, if thou darest; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And darest not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?

PUCK. Come hither: I am here.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT III

DEM. Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy
this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see :
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach look to be visited. 430

[Lies down and sleeps.]

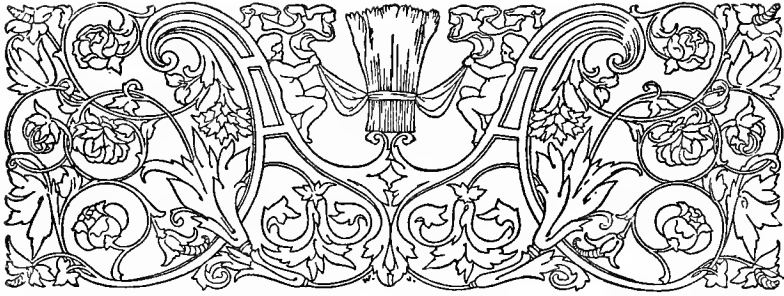
Re-enter HELENA

HEL. O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hours ! Shine comforts from the east,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest :
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.
[Lies down and sleeps.]

PUCK. Yet but three ? Come one more ;
Two of both kinds makes up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad :
Cupid is a knavish lad, 440
Thus to make poor females mad.

Re-enter HERMIA

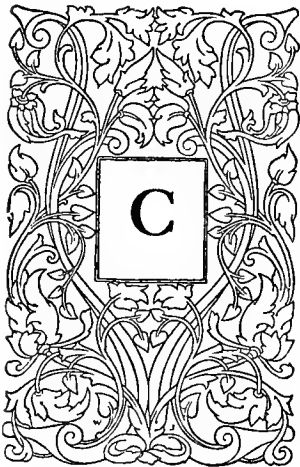
HER. Never so weary, never so in woe ;
Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briers ;
I can no further crawl, no further go ;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray !
[Lies down and sleeps.]



ACT FOURTH—SCENE I—THE SAME
LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, AND HERMIA,
LYING ASLEEP

Enter TITANIA and BOTTOM; PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARD-SEED, and other Fairies attending; OBERON behind unseen

TITANIA



COME, SIT THEE DOWN
upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do
coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy
sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my
gentle joy.

BOT. Where's Peaseblossom?

PEAS. Ready.

BOT. Scratch my head, Pease-
blossom. Where's Mounsieur
Cobweb?

COB. Ready.

BOT. Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get you ¹⁰
your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped

² *amiable cheeks do coy*] caress thy lovely cheeks.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

humble-bee on the top of a thistle ; and, good mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, mounsieur ; and, good mounsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not ; I would be loth to have you overflown with a honey-bag, signior. Where's Mounsieur Mustardseed ?

MUS. Ready.

BOT. Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray you, leave your courtesy, good mounsieur.

MUS. What's your will ?

20

BOT. Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, mounsieur ; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face ; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

TITA. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love ?

BOT. I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have the tongs and the bones.

TITA. Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

BOT. Truly, a peck of provender : I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to ³⁰ a bottle of hay : good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

TITA. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

BOT. I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me : I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

³⁰ *bottle*] bundle or measure of hay. Cf. Cotgrave's *Fr.-Engl. Dict.* : "Boteau, a bundle or *bottle*, as of hay," etc.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT IV

TITA. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
 Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away. [*Exeunt Fairies.*
 So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
 Gently entwist; the female ivy so 40
 Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.
 O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee! [*They sleep.*

Enter PUCK

OBE. [*Advancing*] Welcome, good Robin. See'st thou
 this sweet sight?
 Her dotage now I do begin to pity:
 For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
 Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,
 I did upbraid her, and fall out with her;
 For she his hairy temples then had rounded
 With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;
 And that same dew, which sometime on the buds 50
 Was wont to swell, like round and orient pearls,
 Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes,
 Like tears, that did their own disgrace bewail.
 When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
 And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,

38 *be all ways away*] disperse in all directions. Theobald corrected the original reading *alwaies* into *all ways*.

39 *woodbine . . . honeysuckle*] Woodbine and honeysuckle are usually employed as names of the same plant. But here woodbine would seem to mean "bind-weed," a species of convolvulus. Cf. Jonson's *Vision of Delight*: "Behold! How the *blue bind-weed* doth itself infold with honeysuckle."

51 *orient*] sparkling, pellucid; the ordinary epithet of pearls of the finest quality, which came from the East.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

I then did ask of her her changeling child ;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.

And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes :
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain ;
That, he awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair,
And think no more of this night's accidents
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy queen.

60

Be as thou wast wont to be ;
See as thou wast wont to see :
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blessed power.

70

Now, my Titania ; wake you, my sweet queen.

TITA. My Oberon ! what visions have I seen !
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

OBE. There lies your love.

TITA. How came these things to pass ?

O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now !

OBE. Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.

Titania, music call ; and strike more dead
Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

70 *Dian's bud*] The part of the vitex agnus castus, leaves of which were believed to insure chastity in those who tasted them. Chaucer, who in his *Flower and the Leaf*, ll. 472-475, represents Dian, goddess of chastity, as bearing a branch of the "agnus castus" in her hand. "Cupid's flower" is the pansy, which already has been mentioned under the name of "love-in-idleness," II, i, 168, *supra*.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT IV

TITA. Music, ho! music, such as charmeth sleep! 80
[*Music, still.*]

PUCK. Now, when thou wakest, with thine own fool's
eyes peep.

OBE. Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands
with me,

And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair prosperity:
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

PUCK. Fairy king, attend, and mark: 90
I do hear the morning lark.

OBE. Then, my queen, in silence sad,
Trip we after night's shade:
We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon.

TITA. Come, my lord; and in our flight,
Tell me how it came this night,
That I sleeping here was found
With these mortals on the ground. [*Exeunt.*
[*Horns winded within.*]

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and train

THE. Go, one of you, find out the forester; 100
For now our observation is perform'd;

¹⁰¹ *observation*] *sc.* of the rites of May-day. Cf. I, i, 167, *supra*,
"Observance to a morn of May," and line 130, *infra*, "to observe
The rite of May."

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

And since we have the vaward of the day,
 My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
 Uncouple in the western valley ; let them go :
 Dispatch, I say, and find the forester. [*Exit an attend.*]
 We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
 And mark the musical confusion
 Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

HIP. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
 When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear 110
 With hounds of Sparta : never did I hear
 Such gallant chiding ; for, besides the groves,
 The skies, the fountains, every region near
 Seem'd all one mutual cry : I never heard
 So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

THE. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
 So flew'd, so sanded ; and their heads are hung
 With ears that sweep away the morning dew ;
 Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls ;
 Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells, 120
 Each under each. A cry more tuneable
 Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
 In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly :
 Judge when you hear. But, soft ! what nymphs are these ?

EGE. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep ;
 And this, Lysander ; this Demetrius is ;
 This Helena, old Nedar's Helena :
 I wonder of their being here together.

117 *flew'd*] Cf. Ov., *Met.*, III (Golding's translation, leaf 33 a, last line) : " a great and large *flewed* (*i. e.* with hanging chaps) hound."

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT IV

THE. No doubt they rose up early to observe
 The rite of May ; and, hearing our intent, 130
 Came here in grace of our solemnity.
 But speak, Egeus ; is not this the day
 That Hermia should give answer of her choice ?

EGE. It is, my lord.

THE. Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their
 horns. [*Horns and shout within. Lys., Dem.,
 Hel., and Her., wake and start up.*]

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past :
 Begin these wood-birds but to couple now ?

LYS. Pardon, my lord.

THE. I pray you all, stand up.

I know you two are rival enemies :
 How comes this gentle concord in the world, 140
 That hatred is so far from jealousy,
 To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity ?

LYS. My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
 Half sleep, half waking : but as yet, I swear,
 I cannot truly say how I came here ;
 But, as I think, — for truly would I speak,
 And now I do bethink me, so it is, —
 I came with Hermia hither : our intent
 Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
 Without the peril of the Athenian law. 150

144 *Half sleep, half waking :*] "Sleep" and "waking" are substantives, the objects of the verb "reply." "He speaks holiday" (*M. Wives*, III, ii, 59) is a similar construction.

149 *where we might*] This is the obviously right reading of the first Quarto, which was wrongly altered in the second Quarto and Folios to *where we might be*.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

EGE. Enough, enough, my lord ; you have enough :
I beg the law, the law, upon his head.
They would have stolen away ; they would, Demetrius,
Thereby to have defeated you and me,
You of your wife and me of my consent,
Of my consent that she should be your wife.

DEM. My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither to this wood ;
And I in fury hither follow'd them,
Fair Helena in fancy following me. 160
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power, —
But by some power it is, — my love to Hermia,
Melted as the snow, seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gaud,
Which in my childhood I did dote upon ;
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia :
But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food ; 170
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,
And will for evermore be true to it.

THE. Fair lovers, you are fortunately met :
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Egeus, I will overbear your will ;
For in the temple, by and by, with us
These couples shall eternally be knit :

160 *fancy*] love. Cf. I, i, 155, *supra*, and note.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT IV

And, for the morning now is something worn,
 Our purposed hunting shall be set aside. 180
 Away with us to Athens! three and three,
 We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.

Come, Hippolyta. [*Exeunt The., Hip., Ege., and train.*]

DEM. These things seem small and undistinguishable,
 Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

HER. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
 When every thing seems double.

HEL. So methinks :
 And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
 Mine own, and not mine own.

DEM. Are you sure
 That we are awake? It seems to me 190
 That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
 The Duke was here, and bid us follow him?

HER. Yea; and my father.

HEL. And Hippolyta.

LYS. And he did bid us follow to the temple.

DEM. Why, then, we are awake: let's follow him;
 And by the way let us recount our dreams. [*Exeunt.*]

BOT. [*Awaking*] When my cue comes, call me, and
 I will answer: my next is, "Most fair Pyramus."
 Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender!

186 *with parted eye*] with eye out of focus, which sees two objects when only one is present.

188 *found . . . like a jewel*] Hermia compares herself to one who, finding a jewel by accident, is uncertain whether he ought to retain it or no, is not sure whether the jewel is his own property or another's.

189-190 *Are you sure . . . awake?*] This query is only found in the Quartos.

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was — there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, — and methought I had, — but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the Duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. [Exit. 213

SCENE II — ATHENS

QUINCE'S HOUSE

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING

QUIN. Have you sent to Bottom's house? is he come home yet?

STAR. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

213 *at her death*] obviously at Thisbe's death in the play.

4 *transported*] Apparently an echo of Quince's "thou art translated," *i. e.* "transformed" (III, i, 108, *supra*). Starveling cannot but believe that Bottom has been "transported to the next world," *i. e.*

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT IV

FLU. If he come not, then the play is marred : it goes not forward, doth it ?

QUIN. It is not possible : you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

FLU. No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens. 10

QUIN. Yea, and the best person too ; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

FLU. You must say "paragon" : a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Enter SNUG

SNUG. Masters, the Duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married : if our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

FLU. O sweet bully Bottom ! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life ; he could not have scaped sixpence a day : an the Duke had not given him six-²⁰ pence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged ; he would have deserved it : sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing.

Enter BOTTOM

BOT. Where are these lads ? where are these hearts ?

QUIN. Bottom ! O most courageous day ! O most happy hour !

BOT. Masters, I am to discourse wonders : but ask me not what ; for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you every thing, right as it fell out.

"killed," in which sense the word is used in *Meas. for Meas.*, IV, iii, 64.

SCENE II MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

QUIN. Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

BOT. Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, ³⁰
that the Duke hath dined. Get your apparel together,
good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your
pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look
o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is
preferred. In any case, let Thisby have clean linen;
and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for
they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most
dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter
sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them
say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words: away! go,
away!

[*Exeunt.* 40

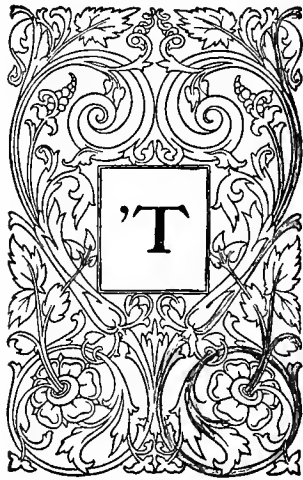


ACT FIFTH—SCENE I—ATHENS

THE PALACE OF THESEUS

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, Lords, and Attendants

HIPPOLYTA



IS STRANGE, MY THESEUS, that these lovers speak of.

THE. More strange than true :
I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these
fairy toys.

Lovers and madmen have such
seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever
comprehends.

The lunatic, the lover and the
Are of imagination all compact : [poet
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is, the madman : the lover, all as frantic,

10

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt :
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to
heaven ;

And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy ;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear !

20

HIP. But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigured so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy ;
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

THE. Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, and HELENA

Joy, gentle friends ! joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts !

LYS. More than to us
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed !

30

THE. Come now ; what masques, what dances shall
we have,

11 *a brow of Egypt*] a brow of a gipsy.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT V

To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?
Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
Call Philostrate.

PHIL. Here, mighty Theseus.

THE. Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?

What masque? what music? How shall we beguile 40
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

PHIL. There is a brief how many sports are
ripe:

Make choice of which your highness will see first.

[Giving a paper.]

THE. [reads] The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.

We'll none of that: that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.

[Reads] The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.

That is an old device; and it was play'd

50

When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

34 *after-supper*] Cf. Cotgrave's *Fr.-Engl. Dict.*: "Regoubillonner, to make a *reare supper*, steale an *after supper*."

42 *ripe*] This obvious correct reading is in the First Quarto alone, and is wrongly altered elsewhere to *rife*.

44-49 The references both to "the Centaurs" and to "the Thracian singer" Orpheus are reminiscences of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. See Bks. XII and XI, respectively.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

[*Reads*] The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.

That is some satire, keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

[*Reads*] A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.

Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!

That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.

How shall we find the concord of this discord? 60

PHIL. A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,

Which is as brief as I have known a play;

But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,

Which makes it tedious; for in all the play

There is not one word apt, one player fitted:

And tragical, my noble lord, it is;

For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.

Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,

Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears

The passion of loud laughter never shed. 70

THE. What are they that do play it?

PHIL. Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,

Which never labour'd in their minds till now;

And now have toil'd their unbreathed memories

52 *The thrice three Muses*] Probably an allusion to the *Tears of the Muses*, a poem by Edmund Spenser, lamenting the decay of literature, which was published in 1591.

59 *wondrous strange snow*] a tautological echo of hot ice. For "wondrous strange," cf. *Hamlet*, I, v, 164: "O day and night, but this is *wondrous strange!*" and *3 Hen. VI*, II, i, 33: "'T is *wondrous strange*, the like yet never heard of."

74 *toil'd . . . memories*] wearied out their unpractised memories.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT V

With this same play, against your nuptial.

THE. And we will hear it.

PHIL. No, my noble lord ;
It is not for you : I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world ;
Unless you can find sport in their intents,
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain, 80
To do you service.

THE. I will hear that play ;
For never any thing can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in : and take your places, ladies.

[*Exit Philostrate.*]

HIP. I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged,
And duty in his service perishing.

THE. Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such
thing.

HIP. He says they can do nothing in this kind.

THE. The kinder we, to give them thanks for
nothing.

Our sport shall be to take what they mistake : 90
And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect
Takes it in might, not merit.
Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
To greet me with premeditated welcomes ;
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,

88 *in this kind*] See note, I, i, 54, *supra*; cf. V, i., 210, *infra*.

91-92 *And what . . . merit*] And any genuine effort to please is welcomed by the magnanimous for its good intention without regard to its intrinsic merit.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practised accent in their fears,
And, in conclusion, dumbly have broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I picked a welcome ; 100
And in the modesty of fearful duty
I read as much as from the rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity
In least speak most, to my capacity.

Re-enter PHILOSTRATE

PHIL. So please your Grace, the Prologue is address'd.
THE. Let him approach. [*Flourish of trumpets.*]

Enter QUINCE for the Prologue

PRO. If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good will. To show our simple skill, 110
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider, then, we come but in despite.
We do not come, as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight,
We are not here. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand ; and, by their show,
You shall know all, that you are like to know.

THE. This fellow doth not stand upon points.

LYS. He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt ; he

108 *seq.*] Mispunctuation gives these lines a sense opposite to that which is intended. A like comic device is employed in the old farce *Ralph Roister Doister*, III, 4.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT V

knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord : it is not
enough to speak, but to speak true. 121

HIP. Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a
child on a recorder ; a sound, but not in government.

THE. His speech was like a tangled chain ; nothing
impaired, but all disordered. Who is next ?

Enter PYRAMUS and THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE, and LION

PRO. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show ;
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know ;
This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.
This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present 130
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder ;
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.
This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,
Presenteth Moonshine ; for, if you will know,
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,
Did scare away, or rather did affright ; 140
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain :
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast ;

145-146 *Whereat . . . breast*] Shakespeare has already ridiculed the
practice of alliteration in *L. L. L.*, IV, ii, 52 : "I will some thing
affect the letter," etc.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,
 His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
 Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain
 At large discourse, while here they do remain. 150

[*Exeunt Prologue, Pyramus, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine.*]

THE. I wonder if the lion be to speak.

DEM. No wonder, my lord : one lion may, when many
 asses do.

WALL. In this same interlude it doth befall
 That I, one Snout by name, present a wall ;
 And such a wall, as I would have you think,
 That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
 Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
 Did whisper often very secretly.
 This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show 160
 That I am that same wall ; the truth is so :
 And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
 Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

THE. Would you desire lime and hair to speak better ?

DEM. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard dis-
 course, my lord.

THE. Pyramus draws near the wall : silence !

Re-enter PYRAMUS

PYR. O grim-look'd night ! O night with hue so black !
 O night, which ever art when day is not !
 O night, O night ! alack, alack, alack, 170
 I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot !

157-162 *crannied hole . . . cranny*] This feature of Thisbe's story is derived directly from Ovid's *Met.*, IV, 65-69 : "Fissus erat tenui rima," etc., rendered by Golding thus : "A wall that parted house from house have riven therein a *crany*."

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT V

And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!
[Wall holds up his fingers.]

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.

O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!

Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THE. The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse
again. 180

PYR. No, in truth, sir, he should not. "Deceiving
me" is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to
spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall pat
as I told you. Yonder she comes.

Re-enter THISBE

THIS. O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

PYR. I see a voice: now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face.
Thisby! 190

THIS. My love thou art, my love I think.

PYR. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

THIS. And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

195-196 *Limander . . . Helen*] A blunder apparently for Leander and
Hero.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

PYR. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

THIS. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

PYR. O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

THIS. I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all. 200

PYR. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

THIS. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

[*Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe.*]

WALL. Thus have I, wall, my part discharged so;

And, being done, thus wall away doth go. [*Exit.*]

THE. Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

DEM. No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning.

HIP. This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard. 209

THE. The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

HIP. It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

THE. If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

197-198 *Shafalus to Procrus*] A blunder for Cephalus and Procris, whose story of constant love is in Ovid's *Met.*, VII. A poem on the subject was entered in the Stationers' Register, 1593. The only copy known to be extant is dated 1595.

205 *Now is the mural down*] This is Pope's emendation of the obviously erroneous readings of the early editions. The Quartos read, *moon used*. "The Folios' alteration, *morall donne*, justifies Pope's correction.

210 *in this kind*] See note, I, i, 54, *supra*; cf. V, i, 88.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT V

Re-enter LION and MOONSHINE

LION. You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am 220
A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam ;
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 't were pity on my life.

THE. A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

DEM. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I
saw.

LYS. This lion is a very fox for his valour.

THE. True ; and a goose for his discretion.

DEM. Not so, my lord ; for his valour cannot carry
his discretion ; and the fox carries the goose.

THE. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his
valour ; for the goose carries not the fox. It is well :
leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon. 232

MOON. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present ;—

DEM. He should have worn the horns on his
head.

THE. He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible
within the circumference.

MOON. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present ;
Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

THE. This is the greatest error of all the rest : the
man should be put into the lantern. How is it else the
man i' the moon ? 241

221 *A lion-fell*] a lion's skin (not a real lion).

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

DEM. He dares not come there for the candle ; for, you see, it is already in snuff.

HIP. I am aweary of this moon : would he would change !

THE. It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane ; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

LYS. Proceed, Moon.

249

MOON. All that I have to say, is, to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon ; I, the man i' the moon ; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush ; and this dog, my dog.

DEM. Why, all these should be in the lantern ; for all these are in the moon. But, silence ! here comes Thisbe.

Re-enter THISBE

THIS. This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love ?

LION. [*Roaring*] Oh ——— [*Thisbe runs off.*]

DEM. Well roared, Lion.

THE. Well run, Thisbe.

HIP. Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a good grace. [*The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit.*]

THE. Well moused, Lion.

261

DEM. And then came Pyramus.

LYS. And so the lion vanished.

243 *in snuff*] See note on *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 22.

262-263 *And then . . . vanished*] It has been suggested that these lines ought to be reversed. But Lysander may be reminding Demetrius of a point that he had omitted to mention.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT V

Re-enter PYRAMUS

PYR. Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams ;
 I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright ;
 For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
 I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.

But stay, O spite !

But mark, poor knight,

What dreadful dole is here !

270

Eyes, do you see ?

How can it be ?

O dainty duck ! O dear !

Thy mantle good,

What, stain'd with blood !

Approach, ye Furies fell !

O Fates, come, come,

Cut thread and thrum ;

Quail, crush, conclude, and quell !

THE. This passion, and the death of a dear friend,
 would go near to make a man look sad.

281

HIP. Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

PYR. O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame ?

Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear :

Which is — no, no — which was the fairest dame

That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd with cheer.

Come, tears, confound ;

Out, sword, and wound

The pap of Pyramus ;

Ay, that left pap,

290

Where heart doth hop :

[*Stabs himself.*]

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

266 *gleams*] The Quartos and First Folio read *beames*, a careless repetition of line 264. The other Folios read *streams*. *Gleams* is Knight's conjecture.

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Now am I dead,
Now am I fled ;
My soul is in the sky :
Tongue, lose thy light ;
Moon, take thy flight : [*Exit Moonshine.*
Now die, die, die, die, die. [*Dies.*

DEM. No die, but an ace, for him ; for he is but one.

LYS. Less than an ace, man ; for he is dead ; he is nothing. 301

THE. With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and prove an ass.

HIP. How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover ?

THE. She will find him by starlight. Here she comes ; and her passion ends the play.

Re-enter THISBE

HIP. Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus : I hope she will be brief. 309

DEM. A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better ; he for a man, God warrant us ; she for a woman, God bless us.

LYS. She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

299 *No die, but an ace*] A play upon words which depends on "ace" and "ass," being given the same sound in pronunciation.

311-312 *he for a man . . . God bless us*] These words only appear in the Quartos, and were omitted from the Folios, perhaps on account of the statute of 1605, which prohibited the use of the name of God on the stage.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT V

DEM. And thus she means, videlicet :—

THIS. Asleep, my love ?
 What, dead, my dove ?
 O Pyramus, arise !
 Speak, speak. Quite dumb ?
 Dead, dead ? A tomb
 Must cover thy sweet eyes. 320
 These lily lips,
 This cherry nose,
 These yellow cowslip cheeks,
 Are gone, are gone :
 Lovers, make moan :
 His eyes were green as leeks.
 O Sisters Three,
 Come, come to me,
 With hands as pale as milk :
 Lay them in gore, 330
 Since you have shore
 With shears his thread of silk.
 Tongue, not a word :
 Come, trusty sword ;
 Come, blade, my breast imbrue : [*Stabs herself.*]
 And, farewell, friends ;
 Thus Thisby ends :
 Adieu, adieu, adieu. [*Dies.*]

THE. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEM. Ay, and Wall too. 340

BOT. [*Starting up*] No, I assure you ; the wall is down
 that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the

314 *means*] This is the original reading, and Theobald's emendation of *moans* is unnecessary. "Means" was itself often used in the sense of "lament." But its union here with "videlicet" suggests that the sense is, "she has that meaning," "she takes it seriously."

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

THE. No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there need none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But, come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone. [*A dance.* 351

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:
Lovers, to bed; 't is almost fairy time.
I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn,
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguiled
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
A fortnight hold we this solemnity,
In nightly revels and new jollity. [*Exeunt.*

Enter PUCK

PUCK. Now the hungry lion roars, 360
And the wolf behowls the moon;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,

357 *gait*] march. Cf. l. 405, *infra*, "take his *gait*," i. e., take his march, go away.

361 *behowls*] The emendation of Warburton which Theobald accepted for the original *beholds*.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT V

Puts the wretch that lies in woe
 In remembrance of a shroud.
 Now it is the time of night,
 That the graves, all gaping wide,
 Every one lets forth his sprite, 370
 In the church-way paths to glide :
 And we fairies, that do run
 By the triple Hecate's team,
 From the presence of the sun,
 Following darkness like a dream,
 Now are frolic : not a mouse
 Shall disturb this hallow'd house :
 I am sent with broom before,
 To sweep the dust behind the door.

Enter OBERON and TITANIA with their train

OBE. Through the house give glimmering light, 380
 By the dead and drowsy fire :

368-369 *Now . . . wide*] Cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 378-379 :

" 'T is now the witching time of night,
 When churchyards yawn," etc.

373 *triple Hecate's*] Hecate is here a dissyllable. The epithet "triple" is derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the goddess Hecate is called "triformis dea" (vii, 94), and "triceps Hecate" (vii, 194). Both epithets appear in Golding as "triple." The epithet is commonly explained by the fact that the goddess has a threefold sovereignty over heaven, earth, and hell, under the respective names of Luna, Diana, and Hecate. In the present text she figures as goddess of the infernal regions or darkness, whose "team" consists of dragons. "Triple Hecate's team" is thus equivalent to "night's swift dragons," III, ii, 379, *supra*.

380-381 *Through . . . fire*] Through the house shed gleams of light,

SCENE I MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier ;
And this ditty, after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.

TITA. First, rehearse your song by rote,
To each word a warbling note :
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing, and bless this place.

[*Song and dance.*

OBE. Now, until the break of day, 390
Through this house each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessed be ;
And the issue there create
Ever shall be fortunate.
So shall all the couples three
Ever true in loving be ;
And the blots of Nature's hand
Shall not in their issue stand ;
Never mole, hare lip, nor scar, 400
Nor mark prodigious, such as are
Despised in nativity,
Shall upon their children be.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Every fairy take his gait ;

with the aid of the drooping fire. For *through* it has been proposed needlessly to read *though*, and to substitute a comma for a colon at "fire." The meaning would then be : "Though the house is almost in darkness, (still) by the light of the dead fire," etc.

405 *gait*] See note on l. 357, *supra*.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT V

And each several chamber bless,
 Through this palace, with sweet peace,
 Ever shall in safety rest,
 And the owner of it blest.
 Trip away ; make no stay ; 410
 Meet me all by break of day.

[Exeunt Oberon, Titania, and train.]

PUCK. If we shadows have offended,
 Think but this, and all is mended,
 That you have but slumber'd here,
 While these visions did appear.
 And this weak and idle theme,
 No more yielding but a dream,
 Gentles, do not reprehend :
 If you pardon, we will mend.
 And, as I am an honest Puck, 420
 If we have unearned luck
 Now to scape the serpent's tongue,
 We will make amends ere long ;
 Else the Puck a liar call :
 So, good night unto you all.
 Give me your hands, if we be friends,
 And Robin shall restore amends. *[Exit.]*

420 *an honest Puck*] Puck, or "the Puck" (as at line 424), is a title usually conferred in contemporary literature on an evil spirit who is incapable of honesty. The speaker deprecates complete identification with ordinary creatures of his name.

421-422 *unearned . . . tongue*] luck that we have not earned (or deserved) of being dismissed without hisses.

426 *Give . . . hands*] Clap hands, give a round of applause.

